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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

D. N. Pritt

THE THIRD WORLD

Kwame Nkrumah

**Tribute to Arthur Horner
Pay, Government & Unions
Facts of Student Life
Case of the Pillered Policy**

**Will Paynter
John Ball
Gina Young
Roger Woddis**

OCTOBER 1968

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Notes of the Month

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — LESSONS FOR US ALL

'The false thesis that the Party is the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, April 1968.

'The Party is the directly ruling vanguard of the proletariat, it is the leader.'

LENIN, 'Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and the Mistakes of Comrades Trotsky and Bucharin.' January 1921. *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 587.

'The abolition of classes requires a long, difficult and stubborn class struggle, which, after the overthrow of capitalist rule, after the destruction of the bourgeois state, after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, does not disappear (as the vulgar representatives of the old socialism and the old Social-Democracy imagined), but merely changes its form and in many respects becomes fiercer.'

LENIN, 'Greetings to the Hungarian Workers.' May 27, 1919. *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 233.

'The Bolshevik slogans and ideas on the whole have been confirmed by history; but concretely things have worked out differently, they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected. To ignore or overlook this fact would mean taking after those "old Bolsheviks" who more than once have played so regrettable a role in the history of our Party by reiterating formulas senselessly learned by rote instead of studying the specific features of the new and living reality.'

LENIN, 'Letters on Tactics', April 1917. *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 44.

September 16, 1968

We have entered into a critical and dangerous period of the world situation. All the burning problems of the modern era have been brought into the forefront by the events in Czechoslovakia and their international repercussions. The questions of socialism and the protection of socialism; of socialist democracy and personal and civil liberty; of the relations of socialist states; of national sovereignty and proletarian internationalism; of the current imperialist technique of the cold war and penetration, and of the best forms of vigilance and defence against them; of open divisions and controversies

within the world communist movement: all these questions of our time have been brought to an extremely sharp point of confrontation over Czechoslovakia. Vitally important as are the issues now arising in the Labour Party Conference, which are dealt with in the current number by D. N. Pritt in his Open Letter to a delegate, we believe that our readers will concur with our judgement that we have found it necessary to devote the whole of the Notes this month at some length to a consideration of some of these problems which have arisen in connection with Czechoslovakia.

Responsible Approach

The present dangerous situation in Europe is not yet settled; it may be only beginning. The problems which have arisen in relation to Czechoslovakia cannot be separated from the general European situation, the advance of neo-Nazism and openly expansionist revanchist forces (with the aims of expansion officially endorsed on maps and in textbooks) in West Germany, and the confrontation of Nato and the Warsaw Pact. These are the conditions which have turned an internal question into an international question. However much every supporter of socialism will desire the most rapid united and agreed settlement of the relations of Czechoslovakia and other Warsaw Pact countries, previously on the basis of the Bratislava Declaration, or now on the basis of the Moscow Agreement and its fulfilment, it would be blindness to exclude the possibility of new conflicts or unexpected developments, either in Czechoslovakia or internationally, which could make these comments outdated before they appear. For this reason, in the present explosive situation, any consideration of the problems involved requires the most responsible approach. First, the fullest sympathetic understanding of the desires of friends and comrades in Czechoslovakia to correct past evils and carry out necessary economic and democratic reforms. Second, serious recognition of the concern of the experienced political and military leaders of the Soviet Union and associated Warsaw Pact countries to check the menace of externally backed reaction taking advantage of a transitional phase of internal division or weakening of the regime in order to strike a blow. Third, support for every endeavour to reach a peaceful and agreed settlement of these parallel aims on the basis of the Moscow Agreement and its fulfilment on both sides. Fourth, the most consistent endeavour to prevent the present differences of tactical judgement and estimation on this question among various communist parties from weakening

the now more than ever indispensable international solidarity against the class enemy. Fifth, unbreakable opposition to the present hysterically fomented anti-Soviet offensive which is seeking to take advantage of the present difficulties.

Stormy Path of Revolution

The path of the world socialist revolution during now more than half a century has never been smooth and easy. There have been sharp turns, confrontations, agonising decisions, often critical divisions at given moments, and subsequent reappraisals. But the caravan has gone forward, where every other supposed alternative path for the achievement of socialism, whether through social-democracy, Labourism or the 'pure democracy' of the Weimar Republic, has ended in fiasco. At every sharp turn the enemy has triumphantly proclaimed the final defeat and collapse of the revolution, or alternatively the betrayal of the revolution. The Brest Peace with German imperialism, when Brailsford declared at the first approach to an armistice that the Bolsheviks had placed themselves 'outside the pale of our international socialist society' (*Daily Herald*, December 1, 1917). The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which aroused horror among the champions of 'pure democracy' throughout the world, but not a ripple in Russia, where the masses had established their own power through their Soviets. Georgia, where the entry of the Red Army to assist the workers to overthrow the Menshevik Government backed by the Entente became the favourite theme song of hatred and denunciation by Ramsay MacDonald and the anti-Soviet chorus, and no socialist meeting would be complete without some lone heckler at the back of the hall shouting: 'What about Georgia?'—all forgotten now, so that younger people, still worked up to excitement over Hungary and Czechoslovakia no longer know what the outcry over Georgia was about. Kronstadt, hailed by the Western prophets as a great 'popular revolution' against Bolshevism, when Miliukov coined the slogan 'Soviets Without Communists!', and the delegates to the Tenth Congress went arms in hand to save the revolution. Nep, proclaimed by the Western wiseacres the final end of communism and surrender to capitalism. The First Five-Year Plan, when the Western commentators split their sides with laughter at the infantile idea that it could be possible to plan a nation's whole economy, and now there is no Government so weak and reactionary that does not boast of its so-called 'Five-Year Plans'. The German Soviet Non-Aggres-

sion Pact, which burst the blood-vessels of the authors of Munich in an apoplexy of execration, but which in fact was the master-stroke of diplomacy that shattered the Munich Four-Power conspiracy, and thereby prepared the way for the subsequent anti-Hitler alliance which the West had previously refused, and saved the world. Finland, where the winter war aroused an even higher hysteria of anti-Soviet denunciation, but which is now recognised to have laid the first indispensable strategic foundation for the future defeat of Hitler. All the lies and slanders of the cold war. Hungary, which raised a new fervour of denunciation. The line runs on and on.

Historical Testing

Thus in the past for over half a century the historical outcome by the stern test of practice has proved the justification of many actions of the Soviet Union which had been widely denounced at the time by enemies or sometimes criticised by friends, but which have since been widely recognised as indispensable parts of the strategy of the only leadership in the world which has proved its capacity for over half a century to carry through and maintain in all the storms and tempests of the modern world a victorious and ever stronger socialist revolution. Does this long-term vindication of the historical record of the defence of the socialist revolution mean that there have been no blots on the record? On the contrary. There have been plenty of defects, reviewed eventually, but sometimes, after long delay, with relentless self-criticism; black pages and bitter memories. In the period of the prolonged struggle against the conspiratorial offensive of Trotskyism, with its doctrines of defeatism and disruption concealed under a cloak of pseudo-revolutionary phrases, and the still more arduous struggle against the apparatus of fascist penetration, which infiltrated leading circles in every other country in Europe, the security organs did indeed successfully accomplish their task, in that in the Soviet Union alone Hitler could establish no fifth column and find no quisling, but in the course of accomplishing this task struck down also many honest communists and caused great harm. Thus the long-term vindication of the historical record of triumphant socialist achievement and strategy does not prove that criticism of the present action must be dismissed as unjustified. Every situation is a new situation. Every action must be judged in its own character and context. Consciousness of the historical record only makes necessary a sense of proportion in approaching the present new problems. We must not be surprised

if the experienced Soviet leadership does not let itself be turned aside from a line of action which it has judged essential for the defence of the socialist revolution and peace, in the face of violent hostile denunciation from the representatives of Western imperialism, for they have always experienced this at every sharp turn and important decision, or even in the face of expressions of criticism from some friends, since it is possible that they may regard such criticism as based on inadequate appreciation of the real situation, or as coming from critics who are prepared to lecture them on how to run the revolution, but have not yet had the opportunity to prove in practice their own capacity to carry through and maintain successfully a socialist revolution. Of course, such a criticism of the critics would be unjust; and in reality Soviet comrades and comrades of socialist countries have shown the fullest readiness to discuss in the most comradely fashion the viewpoints of those who have not yet had the advantage of revolutionary experience. It may be that such discussion, and the further development of events, may help to resolve the differences which have arisen, and which, it should be emphasised, are in the sphere of tactics, not of basic aims. In the final analysis only the historical outcome by the test of practice will determine the correctness or incorrectness of the policies and viewpoints at present under discussion.

Tactical Problems

Tactical decisions, often involving issues which can determine the fate of the revolution and the future of many peoples, are seldom easy. Again and again they have been preceded by sharp discussions and divisions within the collective leadership, and in some cases have been followed by reappraisals and recognition of an error. The Brest Treaty was delayed by the opposition of Trotsky and the 'Left Communists', while Lenin was in a minority on the Central Committee; and the delay cost the loss of the Baltic peoples, who had been in the vanguard of the Bolshevik revolution, to imperialism for over two decades. The long-term success of Soviet strategy for over half a century does not mean that Soviet strategy has never made errors or is incapable of making an error. Lenin frankly described after the event the military advance on Warsaw, which he had supported, as a 'political miscalculation'; 'in the Red Army', he said, 'the Poles saw enemies, not brothers and liberators'. (Klara Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, 1924.) Lenin sharply castigated Stalin and Dzerzhinsky for a too arrogant attitude to the repre-

sentatives of Georgian nationalism. The winter war against Finland in 1939-40 was a strategic necessity and in the outcome a masterpiece of military technique; but the accompanying political step expressed in the establishment of the Terijoki Government under the premiership of the veteran leader of the Finnish working-class movement, O. V. Kuusinen, proved in the outcome a tactical error, since it failed to win mass support. It was an understandable error, since Kuusinen had been the key leader in the old Finnish Social Democratic Party before 1917, the only social democratic party which won an absolute parliamentary majority, and the honoured leader of the Finnish working class in the civil war against the German-backed Mannerheim. But the estimation in class terms had failed to take adequate account of the national feeling. These examples of the dangers of under-estimation of national feeling in tactical decisions and actions based on the estimation of class forces have an important bearing on the present problem in Czechoslovakia.

Socialism and Democracy

The question of the situation in Czechoslovakia, of the justice or otherwise of the action of the Warsaw Pact countries, and of the attitude of the Czechoslovak party and people, has not only been complicated by the fact that the internal development in Czechoslovakia is inevitably bound up with the whole international situation and relation of forces. It has been further complicated by the fact that all the new questions and trends involved in the modern advancing development of socialist democracy have come to the forefront in the sharpest and most sudden form in the recent period in Czechoslovakia. A leaflet was reported in *The Times* of August 26 to have been smuggled out, containing the appeal of a Czech girl student of 22 years of age:

I am a Czech student, 22 years old. For six months this country was led by the people who are doing their best to prove, probably for the first time in history, that socialism and democracy can exist side by side.

Bless her virgin innocence. For her Lenin and the October Revolution, and its fight to achieve socialist democracy as a tremendous advance on the old hypocritical capitalist democracy has never existed. Lenin wrote:

'Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.'

(Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918)

It is not her fault. It is evident that the pre-January routine-ridden bureaucratic regime in Czechoslovakia never taught her the elements of Marxist political understanding, and her new mentors have taught her to despise it. For her the October Revolution and its battle to establish working-class power and Soviet democracy as the new living democracy 'for the first time in human history' is only a date in a history textbook. She never knew Munich or the Nazi terror of a real military occupation. She was not there when 145,000 Soviet soldiers gave their lives in Czechoslovakia to win its freedom. Their graves litter the soil of Czechoslovakia, but her new mentors have taught her to lay wreaths on the graves of the anti-communists Masaryk and Benes. She was only two years old when the Dulles cold war plot to take over Czechoslovakia into the American capitalist orbit, in the same way as had already been done with the clearing out of the communist Ministers in France, Italy and other West European countries, was defeated by the united resistance of the Czechoslovak working people winning the victory for socialism. All that she has known in direct experience have been the restraints and negative features accompanying twenty years of tremendous advance of socialism; and so for her the January reforms to correct evils and strengthen socialist democracy have appeared as a new and heart-stirring leap into freedom, to combine socialism and democracy 'for the first time in human history'.

First Stage of the Battle for Socialist Democracy

Engels predicted long ago that in the era of the socialist revolution 'pure democracy' would become

the last sheet-anchor of the entire bourgeois and even feudal economy. At such a moment the entire reactionary mass steps behind it and strengthens it. Even what was reactionary behaves democratically. Our only opponent on the day of the crisis and the following day is the collective reaction which gather around pure democracy.

(Engels, letter to Bebel, December 11, 1884)

Engels's prediction was proved correct in the battles of the first era of the world socialist revolution which opened in 1917. The battle for Soviet power, for working-class power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the essential means for expropriating the capitalists and landlords and building socialism, which alone could end the slavery of the wage earner and propertyless man to the power of capital and the landowner, and thus establish the indispensable foundation for the real advance of human freedom, was fought

against the embattled forces of reaction (ranging from the White Guards and Monarchists to the Mensheviks and right-wing Social-Democrats) mobilised behind the hypocritical banner of 'democracy'. In philistine language the issue was presented as the choice between 'dictatorship' and 'democracy'. Lenin castigated without mercy 'philistine phrasemongering about liberty and equality in general'. Lenin fought the demands of the so-called 'Workers' Opposition' at the Tenth Congress and drew the lesson of the Kronstadt mutiny:

The danger . . . lies precisely in the fact that the change demanded was apparently very slight: 'The Bolsheviks must go . . . we will correct the regime a little.' That is what the Kronstadt rebels are demanding. But what actually happened was that Savinkov arrived in Reval, the Paris newspapers reported the events a fortnight before they actually occurred, and a White Guard appeared on the scene. . . .

They all came in demanding equality, freedom and a Constituent Assembly, and every time they proved to be nothing but a conduit for White Guard rule.

Such was the confrontation in the first era of the fight for socialist democracy. It was characteristic of that era that, with unconscious plagiarism of Engels, a smart-set comedy on the West End stage during those years won rapturous applause from the stalls with the witticism: 'Democracy has become the last refuge of every True Blue Tory.'

Creative Development of Socialist Democracy

An enormous and varied development has taken place since that era, creatively carrying forward the forms and conceptions of socialist democracy in relation to new conditions and new historical situations. The basic principles, the necessity of working-class power leading the broad alliance of social strata opposed to the ruling regime of big capital and its agents, the indispensable role of the Communist Party or working-class party based on Marxism-Leninism, and the leading role of the Communist Party: all these continue through all the variety of new forms and flexible adaptations. But with the victory of the peoples' liberation war over fascism new possibilities open out. Lenin had long ago predicted that the advance to socialism in other countries would reveal a variety of new forms, differing from the specific forms in Russia, while fulfilling the same basic principles. The People's Democracies which succeeded the overthrow of fascism in a number of European countries, and in some countries in Asia, demonstrated the truth of this prediction

of Lenin. At the same time, with the changed balance of the world, an extending array of newly independent states replaced former colonies and protectorates; and in the majority of these the peoples and governments have begun to seek, or proclaim the aim of seeking, the path to socialism; and in some cases they have been drawn to the influence of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Thus the paths towards socialism, and the condition of eventual fulfilment of socialist democracy, are revealing an increasingly rich flowering variety of forms, at the same time as the validity of the basic principles worked out by Marxism-Leninism continues to be demonstrated, equally by the successes achieved, and by the weaknesses where these principles are violated.

Broadening the Horizons of Socialist Democracy

The new conditions also broadened the possibilities in the advanced capitalist countries. The *British Road to Socialism*, adopted by the British Communist Party in 1951, was the first programme which set out these new possibilities specifically in relation to conditions in Britain, showing how a united labour movement, with the fulfilment of the role of the Communist Party within it, could utilise the traditional democratic institutions won by previous generations of popular struggle, in conjunction with the broadest mass activity throughout the country, to establish the political power of the working class and its allies and carry through the transition to socialism. Since some latter-day critics have sought to dismiss this programme as a specimen of 'post-Stalin revisionism', it may be worth noting that this programme was adopted in 1951, at a time when Stalin was still exercising his political leadership in the Soviet Union, and that its adoption in fact won his warmest personal concurrence, and was hailed in *Pravda* as a 'creative expression of Marxism-Leninism'. A further new stage opened when the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party ruthlessly corrected distortions which had developed in the course of maintaining Soviet power in a period of severe testing in the face of fascism, the war and the subsequent cold war. Active steps were taken to strengthen democratic functioning in every sphere of the Party and the socialist state. A similar democratic renewal had to take place in a number of other socialist states in Europe where there had been violations of democracy, unjust sentences and misuse of police powers. Following this democratic renewal came no less essential economic reform, begun in the Soviet Union in the recent

period, and also in the German Democratic Republic and Hungary, to advance from the initial stage of elementary quantitative socialist planning to new experimental techniques for extending decentralisation, the role of the market and independent factory initiative within the overall framework of socialist planning. All this essential process of democratic renewal and economic reform was retarded by the increasingly hidebound bureaucratic regime in Czechoslovakia, and only began very late, effectively with the Central Committee meetings of last December and January. So it came about that when this indispensable renewal at last began, it burst out with all the more sudden accumulated explosive force in a country in the most delicate and vulnerable international situation in Europe.

Czechoslovakia, Cockpit of Europe: 1918-1938-1948-1968

It is not for nothing that Czechoslovakia is once again at the centre of the situation in Europe and of the international situation. History and geography alike have fated these peoples, almost from the time of the arrival of the Czechs and the Slovaks to these regions in the Dark Ages and the introduction of Christianity (with characteristic rivalry even then between the less welcome representatives of Christian missionary zeal from the German side and the more welcome representatives from the Greek monks through Moravia) to be the central cockpit of every European conflict, through the wars of religion, the Thirty Years' War and the popular liberation struggles against the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to the modern era of the foundation of the Republic as part of the Little Entente devised by French imperialism to yoke together Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania in the anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire*; the subsequent sacrifice to Hitler as a further stage in the grand anti-Soviet plan; the rout of this policy and victory of Czechoslovak independence through Soviet arms; the defeat of the renewed cold war offensive in 1948; and now the present critical testing of 1968.

Old Munichites Return to Their Vomit

All the commentators of every political colour have quoted to weariness Bismarck's 'Whoever is master of Bohemia is master of Europe'. All the old Munichites have sought to make fantastic analogies between socialist action designed (whatever the dispute over the tactical judgement involved) to protect Socialist Czechoslovakia from Western imperialist penetration with their own

infamous Western imperialist partition and destruction of Czechoslovakia, when the ghoul Goebbels could yelp in triumph over the radio to his Czech hearers, after the completion of the Nazi carve-up, 'Czechoslovakia is no more!' Sir Alec Douglas Home, Parliamentary Private Secretary to Chamberlain at the time of Munich, has the effrontery to denounce what he is pleased to call a 'new Munich'. Of course, these gentlemen no more care a twopenny damn about Czechoslovakia today than they did thirty years ago, when they called it 'a faraway country of which we know little', and treated it as a choice piece of meat to give to Hitler in order to encourage him to direct his drive to the East. All that they are concerned about today, just as they were concerned thirty years ago, is to use any means to promote their campaign against Communism and the Soviet Union. The whole band of Front Bench political double-dealers and sapient press commentators, who today hold up their hands in holy horror to denounce the crime of Munich thirty years ago, played a very different tune at the time, when the Communist William Gallacher was the single MP to raise his voice in protest (Churchill was silent) in the midst of a Parliament applauding Chamberlain, and in the French Parliament of the 74 votes cast against Munich 73 were the Communist deputies. The anti-Communists who applauded Munich then, and now profess to deplore it are not really inconsistent; they are pursuing the same anti-Soviet drive as they did then, and find it now desirable to deplore their crime of thirty years ago as a convenient platform to continue the same basic policy. But in fact the retrospect to Munich to trace the roots of the present troubles is too short-sighted. It is necessary to go back to the conditions of the foundation of the Republic. 1918. 1938. 1948. 1968. These are the four crucial dates of the crisis of Western imperialist relations and Czechoslovakia.

1918: Foundation of Czechoslovakia—Two Trends

The foundation of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, whose fiftieth anniversary we celebrate this month, reflected two trends. On the one hand, it represented a victory of the popular national liberation struggle of the Czechs and the Slovaks against Hapsburg rule. On the other hand, at the top it represented the installation in power of the anti-Marxist, anti-Communist, anti-Soviet leadership of the Czech bourgeoisie, headed by Masaryk and Benes, closely tied to Western imperialism. Masaryk had been a prominent opponent of Marxism from the beginning of the century; and Plechanov had

conducted a famous polemic against Masaryk's critique of Marxism. Previous to 1914 he had sought a deal with the Hapsburgs; 'we cannot be independent outside Austria', he wrote in 1909. In 1915 he sought to bank on a deal with Tsarism and sent a secret memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, proposing the establishment of Czechoslovakia as 'a monarchical state' with 'a Russian dynasty. . . . The wishes and intentions of Russia will be of decisive importance' (quoted by Benes in Volume 3 of his *The World War and Our Revolution*). After the victory of the Bolshevik revolution Masaryk became a principal agent of anti-Soviet intervention at the head of the Czech Legion in Russia, financed from London and Paris. The Versailles Powers established the Republic of Czechoslovakia under Masaryk to become, as a satellite of French imperialism, the key base of the Little Entente of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania organised by French imperialism to provide an anti-Soviet bastion. In 1919 Masaryk as President of Czechoslovakia dispatched Czechoslovak troops, in association with Romanian troops, to invade Socialist Hungary, at the instigation of the Entente, in order to crush the socialist revolution in Hungary. That was one side of Czechoslovakia, the side of the Czech bourgeoisie, represented by Masaryk and Benes. But the other side was that of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, a great mass party inheriting the majority of the old Social Democracy, inspiring the devotion of the Czech and Slovak workers, and representing the true future of the country. This class contradiction at the heart of the record of Czechoslovakia still has its echo in the changed conditions of today; and the danger signal of the old bourgeois conservative tradition endeavouring to masquerade as part of a democratic renaissance became visible when, in the process of the really necessary democratic renewal, attempts were made in some quarters to carry through a resurrection and glorification of Masaryk and Benes and a denigration of the entire era of Communist leadership.

1938: Who Betrayed Whom at Munich?

The price of the Western imperialist orientation of Masaryk and Benes was paid at Munich. 1938 was the year of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. Who betrayed Czechoslovakia? Chamberlain and Daladier: Britain and France. But the complicity was bound up with the internal politics of the regime established by Masaryk and carried on by Benes. President Benes had succeeded

the elder Masaryk, while the latter's son Jan Masaryk was Minister in London. Subsequent memoirs have revealed that the Soviet forces and planes were poised and ready to act at once and decisively to stand by Czechoslovakia if Hitler should attack and Czechoslovakia resist, even though Britain and France should stand aside. This message was conveyed through Gottwald to Benes. But the Benes-Masaryk regime, tied by their links to Western Imperialism, preferred to surrender to the Anglo-French diktat rather than save Czechoslovak independence by the aid of the Soviet Union. The strategic gates of Europe were opened to Hitler without a struggle. The independence of Czechoslovakia had still to be won back in the end by the Soviet Union six years later—but at the cost of 145,000 Soviet soldiers having to give their lives in Czechoslovakia alone to win its freedom, at the cost of a second world war bringing death and destruction on the peoples of the world, at the cost of over twenty million Soviet dead in that war. No wonder the Soviet leaders, in common with all communists and socialists and supporters of peace everywhere, are concerned to ensure that this shall not happen again, and that Czechoslovakia shall not again prove the weak link in the chain. For this criminal complicity in the Munich betrayal history will never forgive the Benes-Masaryk regime.

1948: Victory of the Czechoslovak People

Then came the victorious opposite of Munich in 1948. Once again with the cold war Western imperialism delivered its first probing action, to penetrate the socialist world, into Czechoslovakia. Following the victory over fascism the foremost role of the Communists in the resistance in all the countries occupied by Nazism, together with the example of the Soviet Union, brought them a flowing tide of popular support and the formation of coalition governments, including the Communists in the leading countries of the European Continent liberated from Nazism, both East and West. The lords of the Pentagon and Wall Street, in close collusion with the Attlee-Bevin Government, set themselves to undermine these governments and reverse the tide of popular advance in Europe. They began in Western Europe, where the writ of the Anglo-American armies ran. By 1947 their penetration and the power of the dollar had ousted the Communists from the governments in France, Italy and other West European countries. Their next aim was to penetrate the socialist world, and for this purpose in 1948, just as ten years

previously, they chose Czechoslovakia as the first target for their offensive. In his article in February of this year, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the popular victory in February, 1948, Dubcek described how in the post-war years the bourgeoisie based its strategy on

gradually robbing the Communist and Workers' Parties of their influence, first in some and then in other West or Central European countries, of ousting them from the positions they had won by their policy and active participation in the anti-fascist struggle, and resuming their undivided sway. This 'quiet counter-revolution' actually succeeded in a number of West European countries. Czechoslovakia was to be the next target.

Dubcek's formula last February of 'quiet counter-revolution' to describe the modern imperialist strategy for seeking to undermine the socialist regime in the socialist countries, beginning with Czechoslovakia, is a perceptive formula, and helps to throw light on the problems of the present year.

How the People Won

The resignation of the twelve bourgeois Ministers in February 1948, was intended to bring about the downfall of the Communist-led Government. But the resistance of the Czechoslovak working people, led by their Communist Party, defeated the Western-inspired offensive of counter-revolution. The democratically elected socialist-communist majority in Parliament maintained their Government, without the bourgeois Ministers, while the mass mobilisation of the workers in the factories and the streets barred the way to any attempt at a counter-revolutionary coup. A classic model of the success of a peaceful socialist revolution. There was not a single Soviet soldier in the country. So, of course, the grand mythology of all the Western textbooks and journalistic technique calls February 1948, the 'Russian rape of Czechoslovakia'. In his interview in *World Marxist Review* in June this year Dubcek defined the significance of February 1948:

For the workers and peasants, the middle strata and intellectuals, February 1948, was the culminating point and synthesis of the democratic and socialist gains of our two peoples.

This was the first stage of the victory of socialist democracy.

1968: New Testing Time for the Advance of Socialist Democracy

Imperialism never gives up. The victory of socialism and the working people in 1948 opened an era of tremendous advance in

industrialisation, productive output, living standards and social and cultural provision. But with further development the regime began to lose its basis of close-living contact with the people, and take on the character of a bureaucratic apparatus, ruling from above, with police abuses and violations of democratic functioning. With this clogging of democratic life, and obstruction of the kind of economic reforms in which the Soviet Union had led the way, the previous soaring rate of economic growth fell heavily during these recent years. It was clear that a big shake-up was necessary, both in the economic field and in the political field. This is what the Czechoslovak party undertook with abundant energy and determination, beginning from the Central Committee meetings of last December and January; and the new course won in general an enthusiastic response from the people. This turbulent upsurge brought at the same time new problems. It was inevitable that in such a process of drastic correction there should take part not only the masses of the people, but also hostile forces, deriving from the Benes-Masaryk traditional outlook or looking to the West as a model, that is, representing the enemy class standpoint, and trying to take advantage of the opportunity to press their aims. The leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party recognised this danger and warned against these hostile basically anti-socialist forces. It is evident that the victory of these forces would represent a danger to all the socialist countries. In this way the internal development in Czechoslovakia, which as a question of internal policy was entirely the affair and responsibility of the Czechoslovak leadership, to be settled by them alone without outside intervention, became inevitably entangled with questions of international relations affecting all the socialist countries, and giving rise to the various interchanges and consultations which culminated at this stage in the Cierna meeting and the Bratislava Agreement.

Cold War Speculators

A false picture has been spread wholesale by all the mass publicity organs of Western imperialism that this controversy among the socialist countries turned on opposition to the aims of democratic renewal expressed in the January decisions of the Czechoslovak Party. On the contrary. Even after the grave events of August 21, with the entry of allied troops and forced bringing of the Czechoslovak leaders to Moscow, the Moscow Agreement which was reached by both sides set out explicitly:

Soviet understanding and support for the position of the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, which intends to proceed from the decisions taken by the January and May plenary meetings of the central committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party with a view to improving the methods of guiding society, developing socialist democracy and strengthening the socialist system on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

Thus this was not the question in dispute. The January and May decisions were agreed on both sides. The controversy turned on whether, in the desire to fulfil these aims of democratic renewal and extended democratic functioning, the Czechoslovak Party leadership was not in fact giving too many opportunities and points of vantage, including a considerable number of key positions in the press and television, as well as through the formation of new organisations, to spokesmen of the hostile right-wing elements against whom the party was in principle expressing warnings. It was inevitable that the cold war speculators of imperialism should look hopefully to the advance of these right-wing elements as offering a prospect of the weakening of the socialist regime.

Western Imperialist Calculations

Throughout the modern era of the advance of socialism and national liberation sweeping forward over the world, imperialism has never ceased to try to strike back, wherever it could find elements in a country to do its work, as in Indonesia or Ghana or the Nato coup against democracy in Greece. Above all, it has sought to find cracks in the socialist world, to take advantage of internal difficulties, with the aim to spread disruption. Nor is it particular what elements it seeks to exploit. In France in May and June hopes were built on the ultra-leftists (both innocently confused spokesmen and conscious agents), as the high-powered Western press and television glorification of these elements revealed, to provoke a counter-revolutionary bloodbath; but the strength of the French Communist Party defeated these manoeuvres. Baulked in France, hopes were next turned to the situation in Czechoslovakia. The *Daily Telegraph* described the new non-communist organisations (K231 and KANN) which had sprung up outside the National Front as 'an embryonic Opposition', and expressed the view, after the entry of the Warsaw Pact troops, that, if these troops had not arrived, the result of the process then going on would have been 'a non-communist regime':

'Can anyone doubt that the result, not perhaps soon, but inevitably in time, would have been a non-communist regime?'

(*Daily Telegraph*, 31.8.68)

Hostile Forces

How far were there such hostile forces, against which the Party warned as right-wing and basically anti-socialist, trying to take advantage of the necessary process of democratic renewal to push their way to the forefront and masquerade as ultra-democrats? The ostentatious glorification of Masaryk and Benes, the champions of anti-communism and anti-Soviet hostility, or the wholesale spreading of unchecked anti-Soviet slanders about the death of Jan Masaryk (when even the British Conservative press from diplomatic sources with close knowledge of him testified to the truth of his suicide) showed that such forces were busy and had established themselves in some considerable vantage points in key organs of the press and in television. The notorious 'Two Thousand Words' Manifesto, which was publicly condemned by the Party, was revealing, not merely with its obviously provocative calls for strikes, disorders and maintaining 'with weapons if need be' a Government carrying out the 'mandate' they proposed, but from its very first sentence unconsciously betraying the background outlook of those who drafted or were misled into signing it. The first sentence ran: 'The first threat to our national life was the war.' The first? The war began in 1939. Munich was in 1938. Munich does not exist in their record (incidentally, it does not appear either in the Action Programme's rather coyly worded historical account of the period). Munich for these signatories was not 'a threat to our national life'. The occupation of all Czechoslovakia by Hitler in the spring of 1939 was not 'a threat to our national life'. Their memory or picture of that period is cosy. The '*first* threat to our national life' was 'the war' which brought liberation by Soviet arms. Justly the Proclamation of the Czechoslovak CP warned on June 2:

We cannot conceal that some discredited political forces of the past, which think their opportunity has again come, are trying to use the democratisation and to return to the political scene. . . . Such tendencies conceal danger that would not only threaten the process embarked upon in January, but would also involve the risk of very serious consequences for the peaceful development of the country.

Class Issues

In a completed socialist economy the old antagonism of classes, exploiters and exploited, is replaced by the co-operation of the new type of classes in a socialist society, the working class, the collective farmers (or non-exploiting peasants) and the intelligentsia. But, as Lenin always insisted, the old bourgeois conceptions, traditions, and, above all, international connections do not disappear so

quickly, even after the establishment of socialism, and in certain circumstances this type of class struggle can even become fiercer, so long as the international bourgeoisie remains strong outside the socialist world. The dispossessed bourgeois elements, even though no longer able to function as exploiters, 'still have an international base in the form of international capital'. (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 115.) In the ferment in Czechoslovakia this year it was impossible to fail to recognise the class issues in this sense concealed behind abstract slogans of 'freedom' and 'democracy' in general. All those over fifty in Czechoslovakia today had their entire formative years in the bourgeois Masaryk-Benes regime; and in the case of the bourgeoisie such traditions might still be strong in many of their families; while many of their younger people, revolting against the restraints and defects of the socialist regime, might have begun to idealise the West as a model. The *New Statesman*, no friend of the Communist viewpoint, published on June 21 an elaborate three-page survey by its correspondent David Caute on the developing situation in Czechoslovakia under the title 'Can the Middle-Class Revolution Survive?'. He found that 'popular as the new course may be amongst the middle class', there was opposition 'within the ranks of a deeply suspicious working class'. For trends among the intelligentsia he found that:

Westernised modernist Czech art now holds almost total sway in Prague. . . .

The decadence stems not so much from the obscenity, the obsession with the grotesque, as from the indiscriminate absorption of American anti-art.

For the different trend among the working class he reported that a recent Public Opinion Research Institute poll on the democratisation process revealed that:

Twenty-one per cent thought it benefited the intelligentsia more than 'ordinary people'.

He reported as his observation:

The unskilled workers appear to be deeply suspicious of the new policy.

At the CKD works in Prague, the iron foundry workers are the most intransigent, the locomotive workers are less so, and the electrical engineers the most 'progressive'.

One of the cleverest tricks of the right-wing elements which had established a considerable hold on television during this period was to label this suspicion of many class-conscious workers against the right-wing trends of some of the intelligentsia trying to take advantage of the democratisation process as 'conservatism' and to project on the television screen pictures of big factories as 'hotbeds of the conservatives'.

Crucial Question of the Communist Party's Leading Role

In this difficult and dangerous situation everything turned on the effective fulfilment of the Communist Party's leading role. The Czechoslovak Party did indeed warn against the danger of this increasing advance of right-wing anti-socialist trends. But it took no measures, although it promised future measures. This dangerous compliance in practice with the advance of enemy forces arose from a conception which, in the desire to correct faults of the previous regime, began to blur and weaken the crucial leading role of the party. At the head of these Notes we have set out two formulations, one of the Action Programme, and one of Lenin, bearing on the role of the party. It should be borne in mind that both these formulations are referring to the pre-1960 era of the dictatorship of the proletariat, before the establishment of the socialist state of the whole people has brought the continuing crucial role of the party as the vanguard to a new stage. The Action Programme's repudiation of the 'false thesis' of the party as 'the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat' was justly concerned to rectify the wrong practice which developed in the later stages of the Novotny regime, when the party began to act as a ruler by command, by-passing the elected state organs, trade unions and mass organisations or treating them as rubber stamps. But Lenin's formulation always brought out the inter-relation of the party and the class, and more fully the triple unity of the party—class—mass, with the party, not as itself the basis of power, for the power is the power of the working class, but as 'the directly ruling vanguard of the proletariat'. Any weakening of any link in the correct relation of this triple unity, Lenin insisted, was fatal. Rosa Luxemburg's rejection of the Leninist theory of the party, which she criticised as the setting up of an elite over the working class, and her advocacy instead of the independent action of the working class as a class without a Leninist party, reached its fatal outcome in the events of December 1918.

Counter-Revolution Carries No Label

Similarly, from the other side, the bourgeois liberal Miliukov, at the moment of the Kronstadt mutiny, proclaimed the slogan of 'Soviet power without the Communists!' Lenin taught how the counter-revolution always tries to disguise itself in a left form close to the revolution, to appear as urging only a small change, a little improvement of the regime (ending of communist one-party domination) in order thereby to undermine the regime and ultimately overthrow it:

Propaganda must teach the lessons of preceding revolutions, in which the counter-revolution supported that opposition to the extreme revolutionary party which stood closest to the latter in order to undermine and overthrow the revolutionary dictatorship and thus pave the way for the subsequent complete victory of the counter-revolution.

(Lenin, Preliminary Draft of the Resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on Party Unity. *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 627.)

Counter-revolution never appears on the stage with the label 'COUNTER-REVOLUTION' to make it easy for fools to recognise. Unfortunately the Action Programme's further treatment of the vital question of the leading role of the Communist Party tended to dilute the conception into that of a kind of moral exhorter, 'arousing socialist initiative', 'showing ways and possibilities', 'winning over all workers', setting 'personal examples', 'suggesting solutions' and acting as 'a political force' among a host of others.

Bratislava Declaration

In his subsequent self-critical review of this period on September 9 Dr. Husak of the Czechoslovak Party leadership said:

Two problems had been under-estimated during the liberalisation period beginning in January. One was the influence and real weight of international factors on Czechoslovakia's internal situation, and the other certain inconsistencies in the attitude to the real anti-socialist forces such as certain clubs as well as some extremes in the field of press, radio and television (*The Times*, September 10).

This dangerous situation of the increasing offensive of reactionary forces in the name of slogans of 'democracy' and 'freedom of the press', and partial paralysis of the leadership from combating this offensive save with verbal appeals and warnings (and promises of a future press law, but the danger was the present practice) gave rise to serious concern to the leadership in the Soviet Union and a number of other socialist countries in the Warsaw Pact that this represented the familiar path towards the internal undermining of a socialist regime, as in Hungary, and therefore became a matter of international concern to prevent such collapse opening the whole socialist front to the enemy. A series of exchanges followed, which culminated in the Cierna negotiations and agreed Bratislava Declaration on August 4. The Western press at first loudly proclaimed this outcome 'a Czech victory' ('Czechs Win at Summit Talks', *Sunday Telegraph*; 'resounding Russian defeat', *Daily Telegraph* editorial; 'Czechoslovaks' victory', *The Times*), because they considered the reaffirmation of the principle of 'equality, respect for national

sovereignty and national independence' to be a new hitherto unheard of principle in the communist world. They missed the point.

National Sovereignty and International Responsibility

The Preamble of the Warsaw Pact long ago laid down from the beginning, nineteen years ago, 'agreement on the principles of respecting the independence and sovereignty of states and non-intervention in their domestic affairs'. The 1957 and 1960 declarations of the international meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties had laid down the same principle for relations between parties. What was new in the Bratislava Declaration was to register agreement on *parallel* principles:

(1) Agreement on 'consolidating the leading role of the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Parties . . . irreconcilable struggle against bourgeois ideology, against all anti-socialist forces . . . high vigilance against any efforts of imperialism and also all other anti-communist forces to weaken the leading role of the working class and Communist Parties'

and in this context, *after* registering agreement on these and other essential basic principles:

(2) Agreement on 'deepening the all-round co-operation of their countries on the basis of equality, respect for sovereignty and national independence, fraternal mutual assistance and solidarity.'

Of course, the sapient Western press contemptuously dismissed all the key-governing principles agreed at Bratislava as mere 'jargon' and 'a lot of turgid flim-flam' (*The Times*, August 5) in place of understanding their significance.

Warsaw Pact Five Take Action

After Bratislava everything turned on the effective fulfilment of the provisions of the agreement there reached. The Czechoslovak leadership did indeed make an appeal to editors to exercise some voluntary restraint, and went ahead with the preparation of the intended future press law. But meanwhile the offensive of the reactionary elements went forward with increasing openness and confidence, including the building up of previously illegal banned organisations. It is evident that, as Dubcek said in his speech to the Party's Central Committee on September 1, 'the Soviet Communist Party had lost its confidence in the ability of the Czech leadership to resolve internal problems and keep the situation under control'. Accordingly, the Warsaw Pact socialist countries which had been co-signatories with the Czechoslovak leadership of the Bratislava Agreement considered, as they made clear in their subse-

quent statement, that the 'assurances and commitments remained unfulfilled'; that the path of negotiation had thus been tried without effect; and that the urgency of the danger, to prevent another Hungary, made prompt action imperative. On the night of August 20 their troops entered Czechoslovakia ('in response to the appeal for assistance made to us by prominent Czechoslovak Party and state leaders', according to the official Message to the People of Czechoslovakia published by the governments concerned, though no names were given), 'not to interfere in your internal affairs, but to offer, side by side with you, a rebuff to counter-revolution, safeguarding socialism and removing the threat to your country's sovereignty, independence and security'.

Moscow Agreement

The Czechoslovak Party leadership and Government protested against the entry of the troops of their allies as a violation of sovereignty and illegal. Some of the main Party leaders, including First Secretary Dubcek, were taken by force to Moscow. Negotiations were opened with President Svoboda who of his own initiative went to Moscow, and on his insistence the other Czechoslovak leaders, including Dubcek, eventually participated in the negotiations. By August 26 the Moscow Agreement was reached, with unanimous accord of all concerned, to support the carrying forward by the Czechoslovak Party leadership and Government of the policies for developing socialist democracy as set out in the January and May decisions of the Czechoslovak CC; to combine this with 'effective measures which serve socialist power, the guiding role of the working class and the Communist Party' as well as solidarity and friendship with the peoples of the Soviet Union and entire socialist community; to fulfil the commitments of the Warsaw Treaty, strengthen the defensive effectiveness of the socialist states, and 'administer a resolute rebuff to the militaristic, revanchist and neo-Nazi forces' which threaten existing frontiers; and with the fulfilment of the measures agreed, to provide for the withdrawal of the allied troops from Czechoslovakia.

Controversy and Criticism

An intense controversy has followed this action of the five Warsaw Pact socialist states in relation to Czechoslovakia. We are not referring here to the hullabaloo raised by Western official quarters and their press; these always raise a hullabaloo whenever the Soviet Union takes an important step. But a grave controversy and differ-

ence of opinion has developed within the world Communist movement. Of the socialist states other than the Warsaw Pact states concerned, four—Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania and China—have expressed criticism; three—Vietnam, Korea and Cuba—have expressed support. Of the Communist parties in the non-socialist world, a number, including the parties of South Africa, Israel, USA and Canada, have expressed support; the majority, among them nearly all the West European parties, including the parties of France, Italy, Spain and Britain, have expressed criticism. The grounds of criticism have been serious. First, that the action involved a violation of national sovereignty, the Warsaw Pact and the agreed relations between parties. Second, that it struck at the basis of relations between socialist states, since the armed forces of a socialist state had no right to enter the territory of another socialist state without the consent of the party and government of that state. Third, that the alleged anonymous invitation could not carry conviction, since every member of the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Party, including those described by some as ‘pro-Soviet’, had denied participation in any invitation. Fourth, that the evidence of imminent danger of counter-revolution was insufficiently substantiated, and that in respect of the undoubted dangers of reactionary trends which did exist, and which the Czechoslovak Party had publicly recognised and warned against, it was for the Czechoslovak Party to deal with them. Fifth, if other parties considered that the Czechoslovak Party was failing to deal effectively with these dangers, this was a matter for discussion between parties, and not for the movement of troops. These were some of the weighty criticisms made by serious and experienced Communist parties.

Test of Practice

In these differences between Communist parties there is no umpire. Only the historical outcome, the test of practice, is the final arbiter. It may well be that the Warsaw Pact five would reply to the criticisms that the experience of Hungary had shown the harm of leaving a deteriorating situation to reach to the point of open counter-revolution before acting; that the Soviet tanks had already departed from Budapest for four days when the full flames of pogroms, White terror and book-burning compelled them to return; and that to act at once with adequate peaceful safeguarding of the socialist revolution before the flames were alight was the most far-sighted and humane course, preventing heavy suffering and loss of life later. We are still far from in full possession of all the facts

for a final judgement. On the question of external counter-revolutionary agencies of the CIA or West German type, how far they may have succeeded in inserting a finger in the situation, we can normally not expect to have fuller information (when the first British Labour Delegation to Soviet Russia in 1920 expressed scepticism on Lenin's accusation of British complicity in the Polish offensive and demanded documentary proof, Lenin recommended them to have a revolution and find the secret documents) until years later, when aged agents blow the gaff to boast how they organised this, financed that, or pulled off such and such a coup. It may well be that a future historical judgement, with fuller information and the advantage of hindsight, may reach the conclusion that there was indeed a real danger of the weakening of Party control playing into the hands of reactionary elements to undermine the socialist regime in the name of 'democracy' and put through the aim (openly hoped for by the former British Ambassador and Western commentators, including the *Daily Telegraph* editorial quoted earlier, which judged that it would have come off, if the Warsaw Pact troops had not arrived) to pull Czechoslovakia out of the socialist community and align it with the West; that the supreme strategic aim of taking in emergency any action essential for the defence of the socialist revolution against counter-revolution must in principle be recognised; but that there may have been some element of political miscalculation, not in the basic aim, but on detail aspects, on the estimation of the specific relation of forces in Czechoslovakia, in the apparent confusion over the invitation (though there may have been reason for this, subsequently to be disclosed), and in the possible expectation that the arrival of allied socialist troops would have helped to rally the healthy elements against the reactionaries, instead of, as it did, uniting the general body of the people, and all sections of the Party, behind the leaders who had been criticised for assisting the reactionaries.

Path to a Political Solution

In this potentially dangerous situation political credit attaches to both sides to have worked for a solution which would correspond to the interests of socialism and the unity of the socialist community. President Svoboda and the Czechoslovak leadership wisely gave instructions to the army against any military action to oppose socialist comrades. The Soviet leaders were quick to recognise the political reality that the people were united behind the leaders they had criticised, and therefore were ready to put their criticisms on

one side and reach a settlement with the leaders in whom the people had confidence. The Czechoslovak leaders on their side, while not withdrawing their protest, did not sit on their grievances or fulfil the role, as desired by the West, of defiant implacable champions of anti-Soviet resistance. Instead, they recognised the necessity of reaching the best settlement possible, to maintain the general line of advance of their January and May decisions for strengthening socialist democracy and their aim of establishing what they had spoken of as 'the human face of socialism', even if at a slower pace of advance and with some limitations for the safeguarding of socialism, and thus establishing the basis for the withdrawal of the allied troops (apart from whatever be eventually agreed on the frontier question). The Moscow Agreement was thus a defeat for Western hopes of either detaching Czechoslovakia from the socialist community or promoting a conflict between Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries. This does not mean that all problems are thereby solved. The Moscow Agreement is still a precarious achievement. New problems may arise, either through provocations by reactionary elements, or problems of leadership, or disputes over the interpretation of the fulfilment of the Agreement. But it is certainly the common interest of all, equally in Czechoslovakia and the socialist countries, and in the international working-class and progressive movement, that the path of a political settlement, as expressed in the Moscow Agreement, should succeed, to combine the vitally important advance of democratic renewal in Czechoslovakia with the safeguarding of socialism and maintenance of the unity of the socialist countries in the Warsaw Pact. It must equally be the concern of the international Communist movement that the differences of viewpoint on the tactical question involved, which have given rise to intense and understandable controversy, shall not be allowed to weaken the unity which is so vitally needed in the present dangerous international situation on all the common issues of the fight against imperialism. Above all, in connection with these complex, controversial and potentially explosive issues which have arisen over Czechoslovakia, it is necessary to warn all sections of the working class and popular movement to be on guard against the obvious moves of reaction to utilise these difficulties in order to stage a grandiose anti-Soviet offensive. It is necessary to awaken understanding among all sections that this offensive is not on behalf of Czechoslovakia or socialist democracy, but an offensive of the enemies of socialism.

R.P.D.

OPEN LETTER TO A DELEGATE TO THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE, 1968

D. N. Pritt

DEAR Delegate,

I think that you are one of the majority of delegates to the 1968 Conference who want to help our country of decent people and good workers on its way to Socialism, and to secure for us all a better future—and a better present.

I am sure that you are worried, as I am, about the present political situation, and about the prospects both of the country and of the Labour Party.

I don't need to relate at too great length the reasons for the disillusion, anger, and even despair that is affecting so many people in the working-class movement today—the wage freeze; the growing unemployment; the Prices and Incomes policy which doesn't hold down prices and only holds down incomes when they come in the form of weekly wages and salaries (with ever more colossal rises in profits) and tends to destroy the whole basis of our trade union movement; the cuts in education, housing, and social services, the disastrous expenditure on 'Defence,' with small pretended cuts that turn out not to be reductions at all, the support of the cruel American genocide in Vietnam, the supine attitude to racism and rebellion in Rhodesia, and much else.

All these policies are partly cause and partly effect of the permanent economic crisis, and the remedies chosen by the government to deal with this crisis are simply those advocated and applied by national and international bankers and by Tories. They are naturally anti-working class measures, which the members of the government cannot really want to apply, but they *are* applying them. No modern state can be truly independent, and the least independent state is one that is in debt to international finance: so, the policies of our government are in fact determined by our creditors, who are interested in money and not in our aspirations to Socialism, and our whole future is today being staked—as it was by Ramsey MacDonald and then by Cripps—on the hope, or gamble, so often entertained in the past and so often disappointed—that

the bankers' remedy—the securing of a balance of payments in 1969 or 1970 or 1971—so that 'everything in the garden will be lovely' until the next crisis of capitalism, may possibly succeed.

I have had to state all this as the background of what I want to discuss with you: 'What are we all to do about it, and in particular what should delegates do about it at this Conference?'

We know, of course, the only true remedy; it is the long-term one of moving our country into a Socialist economy; but we have to face at this moment the immediate short-term problems. These we must and will face, for we are a great people, and will not accept defeat. The task is not easy, and must be tackled with vigour and confidence, and on the right lines. There are plenty of wrong lines which Labour Party members need to avoid. No good can be done by their seeing the problem only in terms of changing the leaders, still less by leaving the Labour Party or disbanding it—it is the one mass party based on the organised working class today. What must be done is to get the Party and its leadership to adopt forward policies which are really in the interest of the people and not of the bankers. For this, Conference must not only decide on such policies itself, but must also re-establish its position as the supreme Parliament of the party, whose decisions the government must accept. (This very important matter may be a long fight; it may not be fully won in this very year, but the fight for it this year should at least create such an atmosphere as will make the point good by next year, and will meanwhile make it very difficult for the government in any specific instance to ignore the decisions of Conference.)

I hope, and hope with confidence, dear delegate, that you and the great majority of your fellow-delegates will go into the Conference steeled against apathy and disillusion, and will rally Conference and the whole movement for a stubborn and resolute forward fight. (If you think, as you read this that there is something of platitude in it, remember that platitudes are generally true, and need to be repeated lest they are forgotten.)

Now, to speak practically what is to be done at the Conference? It is to fight, item by item and resolution by resolution, for policies which will move the government and the country forward out of the mess created by the policies followed hitherto; to reverse the tendency to obey the bankers and copy the Tories; and to impose on our leaders the duty to reverse the wage-freeze, to get rid of all the measures that have been creating unemployment, including the Prices and Incomes policy, to restore the right and the power of the

Trade Union movement to fulfil its functions, to reduce the 'defence' expenditure, and to put an end to the disgraceful Vietnam and Rhodesia policies.

You will have difficulties to face in your fight. One of them—one which I remember so well from the days when I was a member of the NEC—is the experienced cunning of the 'machine' in the management and cajoling of Conference. I remember arguing with the national agent of those days, Shepherd, on this sort of problem (for as long back as that Conference was too often a battlefield in which the rank and file delegates wanted healthy measures and the 'machine' was resolved that they should not get them); he said to me scornfully: 'Do you think that, after all these years, there is anything I don't know about managing a Conference?' In those days it was done by wily manoeuvres about the 'compositing' of resolutions, by 'timing' of discussions and by careful selection of speakers (including at times the deliberate choice of honest but not very experienced or forceful speakers to attack the 'platform' on important issues). For many years since those days I have watched unhappily how the gap has widened between the policy of the leadership and the real desires of the rank and file represented at Conference, and have sometimes said to myself: 'Surely, this year, the position is so acute that the rank and file will win.' I have not always—but too frequently—been disappointed. I feel that I shall not be disappointed this year. I have to leave it to you, dear delegate, and your fellow-delegates to make sure that in this Conference the views of the majority are clearly expressed, and the leadership is led by the force of opinion to adopt those views.

I do not think that you ought to be despondent as to the future of the party; the general trend leftwards is much stronger than it has been for some years. In the Parliamentary Labour Party, when I compare the position with that of 1945, when I was in parliament and could follow it closely, I see a great improvement. In that parliament, the good and unselfish left-wing elements were always asking me—an independent with already ten year's experience of parliament—what they could do to fight against government policies which they found to be bad; and I always answered: 'If you can get fifteen or so of you to stand together and abstain—or even vote against—then do it; you will be too numerous to be disciplined, and you will do a great deal of good; but if you can't get as many as that you must put up with it, for you would then be punished and perhaps expelled, and the position would be worse, not just

for you but for the country. As it turned out, they never had enough members ready to stand together and fight what one or two of them called 'this something Gestapo,' and one result was thirteen years of Tory rule. But you have seen in this present parliament that the left-wing members who are prepared to resist bad policies are far more numerous, and can 'stand up and be counted,' and numerous enough too to make it very difficult for the machine to take strong measures against them.

Nor is the increase in your strength to be found in the political party alone; in the trade unions—who are very often the same people as you and your fellow-delegates—there is now much greater strength in the progressive direction. I don't want to start mentioning names, but we can all think of a dozen big names in the trade unions who held us back in the last thirty years and are now gone, and of half a dozen or more new names on the scene to-day who are driving forward and will go on doing so. (And, by the way, don't be misled by demagogic exhortations from disgruntled ex-ministers and others who attempt to blame the troubles on 'intellectuals,' and put themselves forward as real 'working-class fighters.' This is a splitting tactic, adopted by men who have themselves acquired in the course of their careers most of the defects which they attribute to 'intellectuals.' The last thing we want is a weakening of the Labour Party forced by the fomenting of antagonism between workers by hand and workers by brain.)

I want to end with one or two constructive warnings. The first is that you must not let yourselves be deterred from your fight for better policies by exhortations to 'loyalty' to the leaders whose policies you think to be wrong. The party has been very loyal to leaders all through its history—sometimes too loyal, for I remember even Hugh Dalton once saying: 'There has been too much loyalty.' Loyalty is due to principles rather than to individuals, and we can happily support the individuals so long as they are loyal to principles. If you see them going against all your principles, you can give thought to what they say in their defence, but you must never surrender your judgment or be led away from your principles, especially when you know that their actions in government are determined by their creditors rather than by principle.

A variation on the cry for loyalty is the appeal 'not to rock the boat.' Certainly, one does not normally want or need to rock the boat; but if the captain is driving it onto the rocks, it is better to rock the boat than to let him wreck it.

Finally I want to say that it is essential to strengthen the movement by winning the unity of all the left-wing political forces; we may well not be strong enough to advance without such unity, and with it we shall be much stronger. For this, we must get rid of the sometimes obsessive fear of Communism, which has been used in this country and still more in Europe to weaken the socialist forces, and has been responsible for more disasters than any other single phenomenon. When I was in the party, and indeed in the leadership, I used to argue about this with many of my colleagues, even with Herbert Morrison. I used to wonder why they were so bitterly anti-Communist (one or two of them confessed that they feared that if the Communists were once allowed to affiliate some of the old stalwarts of the Labour Party would lose their posts!) And I remember that Morrison himself, at one of the weekly meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the thirties, warned his audience that it might sometime be necessary to accept affiliation of the Communists in order to gain strength.

So, dear delegate, go to Conference in good heart, and fight for your principles. You may well help to get rid of disillusion, get better policies adopted, and lead the party forward again.

THE MYTH OF THE THIRD WORLD

Kwame Nkrumah

THERE is much loose talk and woolly writing about the so-called Third World. To some it means all the developing nations; to some it suggests the coloured peoples of the world; others think of it as referring to a vague, amorphous mass of uncommitted peoples, the oppressed and exploited of the earth who are neither 'east' nor 'west' but who are a kind of third, neutral force in the world.

To Frantz Fanon, the 'Third World' clearly meant the colonies and ex-colonies, and in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* he makes a specific case study of the problems of decolonisation. For him, the 'wretched' are those who have suffered the oppression and exploitation of colonialism. 'The Third World is not cut off from the rest. Quite the contrary, it is at the middle of the whirlpool,' and is characterised by 'neutralism.' Its people are committed to a non-capitalist road, since capitalist exploitation is their enemy. But the 'Third World' should refuse to become a factor in the

fierce competition which exists between the capitalist and socialist systems, and ought 'to find their own particular values and methods and a style which shall be peculiar to them.'

Fanon did not mean non-commitment or non-alignment in the commonly-accepted sense, though both have come to be associated with the term. The very mention of the 'Third World' suggests to some a kind of passivity, a non-participation, an opting out of the conflict between the two worlds of capitalism and socialism. It is this concept which seems to have led to most of the misuse of the term 'Third World', and renders its use so misleading. There is no middle road between capitalism and socialism.

Two questions must be asked. First, does a 'Third World' really exist? Secondly, is it possible, either in terms of ideology or practical politics, in the ever-sharpening conflict between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces in the world to adopt a position of neutrality or non-alignment?

Clearly, the 'Third World' is not definable on a racial or colour basis, though in fact most of the oppressed peoples are non-white. Is it then the apparently uncommitted or non-aligned who form the 'Third World'?

The expression first came to be widely used when two Conferences of Non-Aligned States had been held. The first was in Belgrade in 1961. There were 25 participating states and three observer countries. The cold war and nuclear arms race was at its height and there seemed a very real possibility that the world might be plunged into a war which would mean the end of civilisation as we know it. The main purpose of the Conference, therefore, was to employ all the efforts of the participating countries to bring about the destruction of nuclear stockpiles and to divert the vast scientific and technological resources at the disposal of the great powers to positive and progressive channels.

The Second Conference of Non-Aligned States was held in Cairo in October 1964. There were then 46 participating states and ten observer countries. Non-alignment seemed to be practical politics. In my address at that Conference I said:

We are all here as Non-Aligned nations but the term 'Non-Aligned' as applied to us has not yet covered every form of policy which it connotes. We came into existence as a protest and a revolt against the state of affairs in international relations caused by the division of the world into opposing blocs of east and west. We came into existence as a revolt against imperialism and neo-colonialism which are also the basic cause of world tension and insecurity.

I went on to say that these states which claimed to be non-aligned had the right to choose the political and economic philosophy which was considered the most suitable for their rapid development and advancement. The fact that Ghana accepted socialism did not necessarily imply opposition to any other country or people. 'Socialism,' I said, 'does not belong to the Soviet Union or to China, or for that matter to any other country; it is an international idea.'

Many of us thought at that time that it was the duty of the Non-Aligned States to assert their full weight against the senseless build-up of nuclear weapons which threatened the whole world. With 'east' and 'west', two power blocs of roughly equal strength, poised it seemed on the brink of nuclear warfare, there appeared to be reprieve for the world only in the holding of a balance of power by some third force which would prevent either of the two sides from starting a major war.

After the First Conference, Pandit Nehru and I went to Moscow on behalf of the Non-Aligned States, and President Modibo Keita of Mali and President Sukarno of Indonesia went to Washington. Although there was no sudden and dramatic lessening of world tension as a result of these missions, the threat of nuclear warfare has to some extent lessened.

However, in the present world situation, with the armed phase of the revolutionary struggle well-launched in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in the USA itself by the Black Power Movement, it is no longer possible to adopt a third position outside the main conflict. The world struggle, and the cause of world tension, has to be seen not in the old political context of the cold war, that is, of nation states and power blocs, but in terms of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary peoples. It cuts right across territorial boundaries and has nothing to do with colour or race. It is a war to the finish between the oppressed and the oppressors, between those who pursue a capitalist path, and those committed to socialist policies.

Yet old beliefs die hard. Although non-alignment is an anachronism, there are still a few politicians and heads of state who cling to the idea of neutralism and who advocate the holding of more Conferences of Non-Aligned States. Their thinking is a form of political escapism—a reluctance to face the stark realities of the present situation.

The oppressed and exploited peoples are the struggling revolutionary masses committed to the socialist world. Some of them

are not yet politically aware. Others are very much aware, and are already engaged in the armed liberation struggle. At whatever stage they have reached in their resistance to exploitation and oppression, they belong to the permanent socialist revolution. They do not constitute a 'Third World'. They are part of the revolutionary upsurge which is everywhere challenging the capitalist, imperialist and neo-colonialist power structure of reaction and counter-revolution. There are thus two worlds only, the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary world—the socialist world tending towards communism, and the capitalist world with its extensions of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Today then, the 'Third World' is neither a practical political concept nor a reality. It is merely a misused expression which has come to mean everything and nothing. It has been used with equal looseness both by those committed to the revolutionary struggle and by those who are its deadly enemies. The western press has gladly made use of it to serve its own ends by associating it with racism, and by equating it with concepts such as non-alignment, neutralism and coexistence. It has thus helped to prevent the full weight of the so-called 'Third World' being identified openly and decisively as part of the socialist world.

If we are to achieve revolutionary socialism, then we must avoid any suggestion that will imply that there is any separation between the socialist world and a 'Third World.' Misused and misleading political terms must be either abandoned or defined clearly. Where the revolutionary struggle is in the armed phase as in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is particularly important that there should be the utmost clarity of political expression.

The purpose of an article I wrote in 1966 under the title 'African Socialism Revisited' published in African Forum, Vol. 1, No. 3, was to show that there is no such thing as 'African Socialism.' The term had come to be employed as proof of the existence of brands of socialism peculiar to Africa, such as Arab socialism, pragmatic socialism, and this or that socialism, when in fact there is only one true socialism: scientific socialism.

I do not deny the existence of the struggling 'wretched of the earth,' but maintain that they do not exist in isolation, as a 'Third World'. They are an integral part of the revolutionary world, and are committed to the hilt in the struggle against capitalism to end the exploitation of man by man.

PAY, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIONS

John Ball

'Whatever else we may be here for, we are the custodians of collective bargaining'

George Woodcock

SO it was, as we had hoped and believed, the Trades Union Congress which met for its centenary gathering in Blackpool—and not the union section of a Government—Confederation of British Industry-TUC axis. By 7,746,000 votes to 1,022,000 the unions told the Government to repeal its Prices and Incomes Act, with all that it implied. By 7-1 the essential feature of Labour Government pay policy was rejected, to the isolation of those who, while not prepared to stand up and argue for legislative interference in collective bargaining, cast their votes for a Corporate State. In a shrewd move, Frank Cousins (echoing Right-wing demands for unions to 'stand up and be counted' on TUC pay-vetting) demanded a card vote on the anti-legislation Composite 9, so that the movement would leave Whitehall in no doubt as to its feelings. So, with the Labour Party Conference in the offing, the unions indicated the way forward for both their own movement and the Government.

Nor should the sophistication of the unions' stand be passed by without comment. The decision rejected not just a feature of Government pay policy but its most essential ingredient. Mrs. Barbara Castle herself (after a hurried phone call to Downing St.) only emphasised the political defeat by declaring that the anti-union laws were 'a vital part of our economic policy.' Yet, with all that it means for unions to reject a major policy of the Government they worked to install, there was no atmosphere of great reluctance; it had gone beyond the 'agonising re-appraisal' stage. In other words, after four years of Wilson, the need to register outright opposition on the pay issue was clear. It was a decision of political maturity and realism. Without heed to any cries of 'a vote against the Government is a vote for the Tories,' the unions demonstrated that it is action for the most progressive policies (or against the most reactionary) which matters.

Again, it is useful to see what lay behind the vote and the arguments supporting it. Rejection of the Government's pay policy

(for what other policy is there except the Act itself and the White Papers attached to it as Schedules and governing its operation?) means rejecting the underlying philosophies of successive Labour Ministers—not to mention the Prime Minister—since 1964. It means rejection of the central idea that pay rises are the enemy of Britain's economic health, of the Central Bankers' strings attached to loan after loan, of the Government's constant preoccupation with the pound and the balance of payments, and of unemployment and cuts in standards as the way towards economic strength. In other words, the unions took a political stand for the eight million people they represent. Frank Cousins pointed out that the warning was necessary at the present time 'before they destroy not only themselves but us.' And for the future it is unlikely that the lesson will be forgotten—that it is party policy which has to be changed, and party policy which must form the basis of not only election manifestos but also Labour Government programmes. As Terence Parry, newly elected to the General Council, commented:

The repeal of the Prices and Incomes Act is fundamental not only to future relations between the Government and the unions, but also to those between the Government and the whole working people.

The warning has been given, and Blackpool will stand out for that. But it was not an isolated event. Rather, it formed part of a general Leftward trend running through Congress, inspired and helped forward by the industrial experience of union after union these past months—particularly the engineers' all-out strike decision of the previous Friday. The effect of this was that Hugh Scanlon's slashing attack on Government economic policies brought not only economic but industrial reality into the Conference hall.

The first open sign of the mood came on Monday afternoon when the platform was overturned on the question of equal pay. Congress, clearly inspired by the Ford women machinists' battle, decided that the General Council 'shall call upon affiliated unions to support those unions who are taking industrial action in support of this principle.' On industrial safety the TUC was called on to urge new legislation requiring factory inspectors 'to contact work-people's representatives when visiting factories' and setting up joint safety committees with statutory powers. Again (after much recent experience) the call was made for full consultation between unions, employers, planning authorities and the Government before closures are decided on. Nor can one overlook the warning given on the last day that, alongside the repeal of the Prices and

Incomes Act, there must be no attempt to give the proposed Commission for Industrial Relations legal powers over wages.

Plumped into the centre of discussion at Blackpool was also the ineptly-drafted motion from the Transport Salaried Staffs Association, reaffirming confidence that 'the complete realisation of policies contained within the Labour Manifesto will be honoured.' Quite apart from the general motive behind the motion, its wording was far too much for many unions and delegates to swallow. But, more important, it gave once again an opportunity for union spokesmen to indicate that loyalty was not owed to individuals but to a movement and its principles—and policies running counter to this had to be fought. The motion was passed, though (with the large acreage of abstentions) it was got through by a minority of delegates. 'Carried easily,' declared chairman Lord (Lewis) Wright. 'Carried un-easily,' retorted a delegate, pointing a waggish finger at the week's underlying concern.

Attitudes towards the Labour Party and Government, of course, vary widely between different unions. Only about half the unions in the TUC are affiliated to the Labour Party anyway (though they contain a majority of members). There are those voices, George Woodcock's among them, which want a divorce between the TUC and the party, while keeping all lines open to whichever *government* happens to be in power. This was not the view of those who spear-headed the drive against the pay laws. For them it was not an academic question as to which party filled the seats in Whitehall—but neither would they leave a Labour Government to pursue any policies it liked in the name of the British Labour Movement.

TUC pay-vetting itself was virtually given a death blow. Left hanging over a cliff by a mere 34,000 votes, its future is hardly likely to be either long or flourishing. Eight new faces—including Hugh Scanlon, Jack Jones (transport workers), George Doughty (draughtsmen), Terence Parry (firemen) and Alan Fisher (public employees)—will bring a significant change to the face of the TUC leadership. The seeds of many new policies will doubtless be sown at Congress House in the coming period and, with the Right-wing weakened by retirements (Lord Carron's for one) there is more fertile ground for them to take root in. With the Blackpool decisions reaffirming the movement's independence of action, and new powerful voices in its highest Council, we may be in sight of an answer to George Woodcock's long-standing question to the unions: 'What are we here for?'

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR HORNER

1894 - 1968

Will Paynter

General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers

IT is right and proper that in mourning Arthur Horner's death we should also try to set a true and just value upon his life.

His family will treasure his memory most as a father, grandfather or brother, but for those of us who were intimately and actively associated with him in the Miners' Union, in the Labour and Trade Union Movement, he will be remembered for the brilliance of his advocacy of the causes with which he was identified, the unequalled depth and logic of his thinking and the warm humanity of his relationship with those with whom and for whom he worked with such unsparing devotion.

The Miners of Britain have produced many great leaders. I speak as one who has walked in his shadow for the past forty years, who has intimately shared his ideals, who has been privileged to follow him in positions of leadership in the Union both in South Wales and nationally, and I consider Arthur Horner to be incomparably and unassailably the greatest leader the miners have ever had.

His life was vivid, colourful and his work pioneering and constructive. He was a man driven by an inner force to serve people and to ruthlessly expose the ugliness of the exploitation, poverty and violence of the Society into which he was born. Indeed, this is not surprising for a man of his sensitive qualities, born as he was into Merthyr Tydfil, into an industrial town still shuddering from the brutality of child labour in the pits and the pitiless savagery of the coal and iron masters.

Nor is it surprising because of this, that when appearing before a conscientious objectors' Tribunal during the 1914-1918 war his speech was clearly anti-imperialist and based upon the political ideals that were to permeate his future life.

His courage and steadfastness in face of imprisonment and persecution is indeed of the stuff of which legends are made. While imprisoned as a conscientious objector, he was elected as a checkweigher at the Mardy Colliery, a demonstration of the faith of miners in him that remained unbroken throughout his life—he forced his release from prison to take up the post of checkweighman, by an almost fatal hunger strike.

I know of no man, who, facing skilled employers' representatives or the eminent Lord Justices who sat as arbitrators for the mining industry, could put the case and meet the opposing arguments with such devastating logic and force.

Perhaps it was his greatest quality that he was free of envy and malice. I often chided him for his too ready forgiveness of those who sometimes acted with malice against him and who sought to crucify him for his political faith. I sometimes felt that he possessed a gift of understanding and compassion beyond that of a lesser man.

This then, was the man whose death we now mourn. These were the attributes he brought to the service of the miners and the working people in Britain and internationally. These are the qualities of a great man—a great leader of men, a man who for almost half a century served his class with outstanding distinction.

As we sorrow with his family at his death, we applaud his life. It is in the nature of things that death must come to us all at some time and appear as a grievous calamity to loved ones left to mourn. But where life has been spent in the service of people the calamity of death is tempered by the knowledge that it was life not wasted and ill spent. Arthur Horner's life was unquestionably purposeful and worthwhile. His was truly a magnificent journey.

LABOUR MONTHLY

FORTY YEARS AGO

Arthur Horner on the TUC and Russia

When the resolution on International Trade Unity and Anglo-Russian relations came up, it was decided only to permit movers of resolutions to speak five minutes, seconders three minutes, and no further speeches except in opposition to the resolution. This meant that there could be no real discussion at all on this vital question of international working-class relations, and that all who would participate outside the movers and seconders must speak against.

It would have been a crime to fail to draw attention to the fact that the 'Peace' resolution of the preceding day had in effect ranged the Congress with British capitalism against the world's workers, and cowardly to have allowed Thomas to so scurrilously attack the Russian workers without informing him and the Congress that the British Movement was in greater need of association with the Russian workers and peasants than they were in need of us, as was proved in the miners' struggle in 1926 . . . There can only be one basis of unity between the Russian workers and the workers of this country and that is upon the mutually accepted understanding that we mean 'Unity for Struggle against Capitalism', and this cannot be got from a General Council pledged to bolster up capitalism by the aggravation of the workers' sufferings at home.

(From 'the TUC and the Future of Trade Unionism,'
by Arthur Horner, *Labour Monthly*, October 1928.)

THE FACTS OF STUDENT LIFE

Gina Young*

'The only thing I regret about post-war Oxford is that I hadn't yet grasped the salient point about a university: it is the only time in life when those lucky enough to go there can spend three whole years in reading anything they please. *There's* privilege, indeed.'

John Freeman, *New Statesman*, September 6, 1968.

PRIVILEGE, indeed. People who have not attended a university tend to be starry-eyed about the whole business. This is understandable. John Freeman gives evidence that graduates feel the same way, but the point about the quotation is that he *missed* what he calls the salient point. Most do. It may be true, however, of a small number of courses in a very small number of colleges that the student can just sit back and read. No doubt such students are sitting back and reading and declining to join in the general clamour that characterises student life just now. Good luck to them.

The rest of us, however, have to live in an imperfect world, of which the roughness of the impact may be lessened by a little advance warning. Whatever you expect a university to be and to give you, you will almost certainly be disappointed. To many, there is something special about a university graduate; a great cultural tradition has touched him and left him a better, more able, and somehow Other being. Certainly a student entering university feels that he has achieved a hard-won privilege. Finally all things are equal, and brains is what counts. Or some such rubbish.

Alas, nothing is equal. There is some statistic which says that 25 per cent of all students are of working class origin, but surveying the field one has to conclude that some are more working class than others. At any rate, the children of the *industrial* working class are very poorly represented.

Once there, their troubles are not over. A student from a working class home suffers from a number of disadvantages. He is much poorer than his colleagues. Unless his parents are practically on the bread line, he won't even get the maximum grant, which itself is not generous. Living accommodation, particularly in London, is hard to get. There are instances of 'hall' accommodation being reserved for 'suitable' persons—it is not necessary to define this too rigidly,

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only to notice how very rarely a person from the working class is 'suitable.' If you don't get hall accommodation you must either get board and lodging or a room in a flat and feed yourself. Prices for board and lodging are very high, but if you elect the other alternative you will probably not eat enough. Everyone knows that students suffer greatly from nervous disorders; that lack of suitable or enough food is a contributory factor to these disorders none can doubt.

A poor student's studies will be adversely affected by his poverty in more direct ways also. Universities do not provide individual working space ('Good God, this is a *university*, not a secondary school!') and libraries are almost always crowded. The student is thrown back upon the facilities available in his home, hall, or digs, and these are rarely bearable, let alone adequate, in the case of a poor student.

Further, his grant has to cover books and other equipment necessary for his studies. There is included in the maximum grant a notional sum to cover the cost of books, but it is inadequate even for ordinary reading degrees; for art students the provision of paints, brushes, frames and canvases is a nightmare.

Students are beginning to take a somewhat combative attitude to their studies. Insist that the last 15 minutes of a lecture be given over to questions and everyone will prepare for the lecture with more enthusiasm—students and lecturer alike. Argue with your tutor and he may wake up and notice you. Ask for representation on the staff committee. No matter how non-political everyone is, the chances are that a collective will emerge and progress will be made.

But it cannot be denied, and I would not want to deny, that the student movement *is* political; it exists because *all* students, whether or not of the working class, have a growing feeling, however inarticulate, that when they graduate the conditions of their lives may well place them in opposition to the forces of monopoly capitalism.

IN OUR NOVEMBER ISSUE

A hitherto unpublished letter from Lenin to Gorky answering protests on the arrests of bourgeois intellectuals.

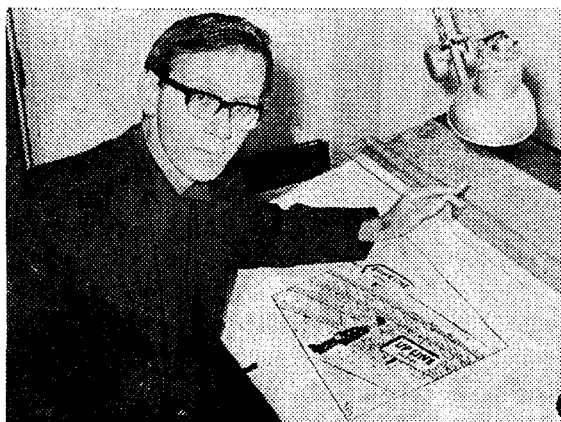
Personal memories of Lenin by Zelda Kahan Coates.

THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by a cartoonist



Eccles, cartoonist for the Morning Star, was born in the East End of London, began cartooning whilst in the army in the Far East. Has a twin brother with whom he often works on cartoons. Studied architecture and worked on housing design for a number of years. Likes both political and non-political cartooning which are all part of looking at life around. Finds that being funny can be a very serious business.

CARTOONING today is very much an accepted part of the newspaper scene although it differs very much from the written side of journalism. This is largely in the nature of the comment, in that the cartoon can only make one point in commenting on news against the writer's opportunity to express an opinion, modify it or argue a case for it as he wishes.

This pointedness or sharpness to create an immediate impression or cause a laugh gives the cartoon its particular quality, it relies on the initial impact and once the reader has to pause and think the impact is generally lost.

Within cartooning itself there is a dual approach either towards the serious or humorous in style. This inclination appears quite early on in the cartoonist's work and is a major factor in determining the ultimate drawing style adopted.

To a large extent the success of a cartoon depends on the unity between the idea and its expression, the way it is drawn or presented; the serious in politics demanding greater boldness and drama, the satire more lightness and flippancy.

This is of course where the question of individual taste comes in, the reaction to a cartoon, to the treatment of the subject is either immediate like or dislike. Readers themselves very often have a general tendency to prefer a particular approach to the treatment of politics and will prefer either a serious or humorous cartoon.

Generally I lean towards the humorous rather than the tragic in politics, although within the wide range of topics to be dealt with, there are many that are not the subject for humour and call for more serious comment.

It is easier to react mentally to a situation, to deal with it in a serious or humorous way than to vary one's drawing technique, which becomes inbuilt, to suit. The ability to have a fully comprehensive style or approach is probably a very long term thing and I can imagine that writers or actors probably face very much the same problems in the question of expression.

The cartoonist is putting over his own individual point of view and cannot hope, however hard he may try, to please everybody, irrespective of whether they are going in a somewhat similar political direction.

What is true of style and taste is of course equally true of politics with its enormously diverse shades of opinion and expression. Taking even some of the more controversial topics of the last few years, the Arab-Israel conflict, events in China, the pill, the recent situation between the USSR and Czechoslovakia, one would tend to please or upset someone whatever viewpoint was taken.

For this reason it is preferable to be judged on the main trend of one's work done over a number of years rather than on the reaction, good or bad, to any one particular cartoon.

In the long run I think, working in any particular political field, that the artistic freedom one enjoys depends very much upon having one's work judged as a whole and that within that, the ability to be controversial and express an individual point of view is a normal thing.

ECCLES

Sherlock Holmes investigates

THE CASE OF THE PILFERED POLICY

(recounted by Dr. Watson)

Roger Woddiss

DURING HIS LONG AND RENOWNED career my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes had been consulted in many cases involving affairs of state, but none culminated in a more startling conclusion than that of the Pilfered Policy.

The affair began on a late September evening. An uncertain summer had at last yielded to the chill of autumn and we were glad to be secure in the comfort of our rooms at 221B Baker Street.

We had partaken of a light repast and I was still seated at the table perusing the evening paper, while Holmes stood with his back to me gazing out of the window.

'I share your fear for our country's future, Watson,' said he suddenly.

I gave a start of astonishment. 'How on earth could you have divined my thoughts, Holmes?' I asked.

He turned, his deep-set eyes agleam with amusement.

'Very simply, my friend. You were humming "Rule, Britannia." You have been rustling that newspaper incessantly. During supper you stirred your tea absent-mindedly with your stethoscope. Furthermore, you are wearing odd socks. It was not difficult to deduce the cause of your anxiety.'

'Amazing!' I exclaimed, gazing at him in admiration.

'Elementary, my dear Watson. But enough, I believe we have a visitor.'

As he spoke there was a tap at the door and Mrs. Hudson appeared.

'There's a gentleman to see you, Mr. Holmes—very urgent, he says.'

'Show him in, Mrs. Hudson, and please prepare a fresh pot of tea.'

'It is help I need, not tea!' cried the visitor, brushing Mrs. Hudson unceremoniously aside and striding into the room.

I gave an involuntary gasp at his appearance. He was a short, plumpish man, wearing a flowing cloak and a wide-brimmed hat pulled down low over his eyes which were hidden behind dark-tinted glasses. A heavy black beard hung almost to his waist.

'Pray be seated, my dear sir,' murmured Holmes soothingly. 'If it is in my power to assist you I am at your disposal.'

Our caller clutched my friend's arm and spoke hoarsely. 'I have lost a valuable document—I believe it to be stolen. If it is not recovered by tomorrow I am a ruined man.'

'Who are you, sir? And why tomorrow?'

'I beg you not to ask such questions, Mr. Holmes. All I request of you is that you find the document—'

'Very well,' interjected my friend. 'If you will not disclose your identity, further words are useless.' And with that the great detective had leapt towards our hirsute visitor and was tugging at his beard.

'Hold hard, Holmes!' I cried in dismay. 'That is no way—' then I stopped and stood staring, for the beard had come away in Holmes' hand.

'The Prime Minister, I believe,' said Holmes quietly.

The Prime Minister (for it was indeed he) sank with a groan on to the settee, where he removed with a trembling hand the glasses and hat which had completed his disguise. Instinctively I stood stiffly to attention, but Holmes showed no such deference.

'Now, sir,' said he sternly. 'Let us have an end to all dissembling. Tell me everything candidly and I will do my utmost to help you.'

'How on earth did you know?' I gasped incredulously.

'Perceive the particles of sand on the welt of our friend's boot. Such sand is only to be found on the Isles of Scilly. That, and the sauce-stains on his tie, told me who our visitor was. Well, sir? I am waiting.'

The Prime Minister passed his hand across his brow. 'I will tell you everything. The stolen document is a policy—'

'An insurance policy?' I queried.

'I fancy not,' said Holmes impatiently. 'Pray continue.'

'No, it is the policy on which the Government was elected. There are things in it which are best forgotten, pledges which I made foolishly to the nation in my eagerness for office and which I cannot possibly redeem. I fear that ill-intentioned men, having seized this policy, will make a great mischief by publishing it at my party's conference in Blackpool tomorrow. If it has got into the wrong hands my career is at an end.'

'Finality, as Disraeli remarked, is not the language of politics,' said Holmes, then added in a brisker tone, 'Where was this precious document kept?'

'In my safe at No. 10 Downing Street, at the bottom of a pile of State papers. It had lain there for two years undisturbed. Today I discovered that it had vanished.'

'The safe had not been forced?'

'No, sir.'

'Leave this matter in my hands. I will communicate with you further when I have made certain enquiries.'

The Prime Minister rose, replaced his disguise and went to the door. 'I am counting on you, Mr. Holmes.'

After he had departed Holmes took up his violin and drew from it a plaintive air. Suddenly he stopped and started to pace the room, his hawk-like face alight with excitement.

'Ha! The game is afoot!' cried he. 'I shall catch the first train to Blackpool. Do you stay here and await fresh developments.'

I could hardly conceal my disappointment at thus being excluded from the adventure, but I knew his methods.

During the next two days I was in a fever of impatience awaiting Holmes' return. Then one night I was wakened from my sleep by a tugging at my shoulder. It was Holmes.

'Come, Watson!' cried he eagerly. 'The end of the trail is in sight. Into your clothes at once!'

Ten minutes later we were speeding in a cab through the silent streets. Holmes puffed silently at his pipe for some minutes. Then, as I was beginning to despair of being made privy to his thoughts, he said suddenly, 'The air is bracing at Blackpool, and I do not speak only of the weather. The conference delegates are a lively body of men and women, anxious for a speedy solution to the many problems which beset our country.'

'But what of the missing policy!' I asked.

'It is in good hands,' he smiled enigmatically. 'The ill-intentioned men to whom the Prime Minister referred are to be sought in other places than Blackpool. But I see we have arrived at Downing Street.'

The burly policeman on duty outside No. 10 raised a restraining hand as we approached, then started on seeing my companion. He saluted smartly and fell back to allow our passage.

'Evening, Mr. Holmes,' said he in undisguised awe. 'What brings you gentlemen here at such a late hour?'

'A matter of the gravest national importance, constable,' replied Holmes as we hurried up the steps.

An astonished servant invited us to wait while he summoned his master. Presently the Prime Minister appeared, a dressing-gown flung hurriedly over his night-attire.

'What news, Holmes? Have you found the miscreant, and the missing policy?'

'The mystery is solved,' said Holmes. 'I found the solution, or the better part of it, in Blackpool.'

'Ah! Then it was one of those conference fellows—' began the Prime Minister, but broke off as Holmes shook his head.

'No, our villain is not to be found among the delegates. They are all familiar with the contents of the policy.'

'You talk in riddles, Holmes!' I exclaimed. 'If they know how can they be innocent?'

'They are innocent *because* they know, Watson. They were only too eager to talk about it. No, it was obvious that whoever took the policy was bent on keeping it concealed and forgotten. But who? I must confess the answer to that question eluded me until I arrived back in London this evening and heard a newsboy crying outside Euston station. Then everything was clear to me.'

'Not to me, Holmes,' I said. 'Where should we seek for the culprit?'

'We shall not need to stir from this room. Yes, Watson, the policy was pilfered by the wretch who now stands before us!'

'Impossible!' I gasped, staring at the Prime Minister whose face had of a sudden turned ashen. Then the correctness of Holmes' charge became only too hideously apparent. 'But why, Holmes, why?'

'Because the surrender of the policy was the price demanded by Swiss bankers in exchange for a loan. (I heard news of the loan being shouted by the newsboy.) A policy with a high surrender-value indeed!'

The Prime Minister fell to his knees and clawed at my companion's coat.

'Be merciful, sir, I implore you! I had no alternative!'

'Others are of a different opinion,' said Holmes grimly, tearing himself free.

'Are you going to expose me?' said the Prime Minister hoarsely, wringing his hands.

'That is hardly necessary. I fancy you have exposed yourself. The policy on which you were elected may lie mouldering in the vaults of a Swiss bank, but the memory of it still lives in the hearts of your followers. Come, Watson, let us leave this craven to his conscience, such as it is, and to the judgement of his fellows.'

(With apologies to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)



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Party Polly or Up the Chat

Let's have some more, some more what, some more words,
Some more words but what for I don't see,
You don't see, you do see, don't want to you mean,
Don't want to know, don't you agree
Agree about what, there yuh go I said know
Not your nose, can't see further than that
Do you hear, Oh! not hear, no don't get on to that
On to what, on to that, you mean all of that chat
Some more words, oh I do so agree.

Very Andy for Pandly, but not so for us, for U.S. what a state
they are in
They've got plenty, of what, why of bombs, but what for
To save us from old Ho Chi Minh
They're Commies, what! Where! why under your bed
They're after your bread and your cheese
All I've got is a Gunter foot and mouth no punter
I told you Red Plot—in the trees
Let's all make a dash, oh my Gawd we've got one,
Got one what, why a Dash in the Dock
That's almost a pun, don't use words let's have fun
To the market so common let's flock.

Not no more, no more what, no more words
But why not, there's no point, I don't see
Do you hear, well hear what, I can't see
I'm just chatting with words, absolutely I do so agree.

Tony Selby

◀ *'The Politician', relief-print by Ken Sprague.*

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

THERE has been a heart-warming response to the special announcement of the Editorial Board last month. Many readers reacted instantly and generously to our appeal and made it clear that they regarded the enforced price rise as a challenge they were determined to meet with extra help for our journal.

Several friends expressed surprise that we had been able to maintain the old price despite the wildly rising costs in every direction, and fully realised the problems this had created for *LM*.

We must point out that the Fund total below is actually the August figure (due to printing schedules the Fund is always two months behind), but we hope we won't again have to show a figure so far below our needs. In the present situation the Fund assumes even greater significance, and basing our hopes on the good-will and affection shown to our magazine through many difficult periods, we are counting confidently on this continued and growing support.

Lavish publicity campaigns and expensive advertising are beyond our means—we depend mainly on our readers to introduce *LM* to their friends and work-mates. The advantageous subscription terms, coupled with the student concessionary rate, were designed to make *LM* more readily available, and represent very good value indeed.

We have been greatly moved by the number of readers who have written to us since we announced the price-rise, stressing their appreciation of *LM*'s role in putting the political scene in perspective and its coverage of the mounting industrial battles.

'Political life without *LM* would be unthinkable,' writes a Scottish reader, 'as long as I've a head to think with and eyes to see with, I'll regard it as cheap at *any* price.'

This is the outlook that has sustained us for 47 years and fills us with hope for the future of our magazine.

Helen Falber

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HELEN FALBER

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Look Here, Leon Rosselson. Harmony Music, 120 pp., 10s. 6d.

The Japanese Socialist Party and Neutralism, J. A. A. Stockwin. Cambridge University Press, 198 pp., 78s.

Anatomy of the Soviet Union, Edited by Harrison E. Salisbury. Thomas Nelson and Sons, 484 pp., 70s.

The Organisation of British Central Government, F. M. G. Willson. Allen and Unwin, 522 pp., 55s.

Angels in Marble, Robert McKenzie and Allan Silver. Heinemann, 296 pp., 50s.

The Story of Ruskin College, Edited by D. N. Chester. Oxford University Press, 28 pp., 2s. 6d.

Towards a High Wage, High Productivity Economy, F. James Fielding. Economic Research Council, 14 pp., 2s. 6d.

(We apologise to readers that, owing to the extended Notes, we have had to hold over book reviews, including a review by Allen Hutt of 'History of the Communist Party of Great Britain,' by James Klugmann—Ed. *LM*.)

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